

Board of Trustees
Suffolk County Department of Parks
Recreation and Conservation

Minutes of October 19, 2006 at Meadow Edge, West Sayville

BOARD MEMBERS

PRESENT:

Ray Corwin	Chairman, Member at Large
Miles Borden	Trustee, Town of Smithtown
Gil Cardillo	Trustee, Town of Riverhead
Gregory Dawson	Trustee, Town of Islip
Jeanine Dillon	Member of the Board
John Fritz	Trustee, Town of Babylon
Scott Hilary	Trustee, Town of Southold
Alexander McKay	Trustee, Town of Huntington
Terrence Pearsall	Member of the Board
Richard White, Jr.	Trustee, Town of East Hampton

ABSENT:

Aurelio Colina	Trustee, Town of Southampton
Gary Olsen	Trustee, Town of Brookhaven
Vacant	Trustee, Town of Shelter Island

**PARKS
DEPARTMENT:**

Ronald F. Foley	Commissioner
Tracey Bellone	Deputy Commissioner
Colleen Hofmeister	Contracts Manager
William B. Sickles	Senior Parks Superintendent
Nick Gibbons	Senior Environmental Analyst
Tom Hroncich	Marketing Specialist
Ann Rothenberg	Assistant to the Commissioner

GUESTS:

Tom Isles	Director, Planning Department
Lauretta Fischer	Principal Environmental Analyst, Planning Department
Janet Longo	Assistant to Commissioner, Department of Environment & Energy
Pat Zielenski	Director, Real Property Acquisition and Management Division, Dept. of Env. & Energy

Chairman Corwin opened the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 21, 2006

Page 1 – adjust “Guests” - Janet Longo attended meeting – remove Margo Myles

Page 3 – last paragraph, under Santapogue Creek, change extreme corridors to stream corridors

Page 5 – second paragraph, adjust spelling of Carmens River to Carmans River

Page 8 – paragraph 5, Chairman’s Report, adjust date of Foundation meeting from October 19, 2006 to November 16, 2006

Page 9 – first line, after Smith Point, add word campgrounds

A motion to accept the minutes as amended was made by Trustee McKay and seconded by Trustee Pearsall. The minutes were unanimously approved by a vote of 10-0-0.

PRESENTATION BY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND REAL ESTATE

Lauretta Fischer presented one acquisition.

Abel & Delarue Property, Town of Brookhaven

Acquisition of 0.1377 acres in Holtsville along the Patchogue River corridor. This area was also on our Master List and under the old Open Space Preservation Program. We were zeroing in on this watershed for acquisition over ten years ago. In addition to the Parks Department, the Department of Public Works also has properties along this corridor to protect this watershed.

A motion to approve proposed acquisition was made by Trustee White and seconded by Trustee Fritz. Unanimously approved by a vote of 10-0-0.

COMMISSIONER’S REPORT

Commissioner Foley: On October 18th the County Executive cut the ribbon at the largest all access playground in Suffolk County at Lake Ronkonkoma. Many children, parents and supervisors showed up. It was a heart warming event.

Chairman Corwin: Is this the first all access playground?

Commissioner Foley: We have one at Lakeland and Bill Sickles is working on a design for one at Smith Point. Our trend now will be if we build a playground, or replace a playground, it will be all access.

Concession Update

Colleen Hofmeister: We went through a full fledged RFP for canoe/kayak concessionaires. Trustee McKay helped to serve as your representative on the committee. We received two proposals from operators who had already been operating at Paul T. Given Park. We have been very satisfied with them, reviewed their proposals and have decided to award contracts to them once again. They will both receive a contract for an initial 3 year term with an optional 3 year period to renew.

We have negotiated an agreement with Atlantis Marine World. They have been utilizing some Parks property for an educational environmental boat tour. We were able to negotiate, in exchange for use of the Parks property, they will give all Suffolk County green key card holders a 25% discount on the boat tour itself and an additional 10% discount for admission to the aquarium. We’re hoping to enter into more agreements of this nature where green key card

holders can benefit.

We will be going out for a full fledged RFP for the golf professional at Indian Island Golf Course. The current contract ends at the end of 2007. We're just starting to look at the facility to see what type of capital improvements may be required to incorporate within the RFP. I'll be coming back to you as we get closer asking for a representative from the Trustees to serve on that committee.

Nick Gibbons: I would like to thank Trustee Fritz for coming to the CEQ meeting yesterday morning. As part of the capital program for 2007, there's an item for Cupsogue County Park where we're going to build an approximately 350 ft. long boardwalk off the north end of the parking lot. There will be an observation platform at the end of it. The idea is to gain access to the tidal flats off the back of the park for shore bird migration observation. This was my second swing at the project and having John there made a difference. It was passed yesterday. Before the meeting Dick White informed me the last piece of the puzzle for the GATR site communications project is in. I have not seen it yet. We hope to get on the CEQ agenda for November.

Chairman Corwin: I'd like to also thank Trustee Fritz for his assistance with the project. Before I begin the Chairman's Report, there's one member of the public present, Mr. Bryan Lilly, who would like to talk about the skateboard park at Smith Point Park.

PUBLIC PORTION

Bryan Lilly: About one year ago I spoke with the Trustees about a skate park at Smith Point. I'm here to see what has happened since then. There was a final design meeting in March of this year and nothing has been spoken about this since. I was told by the Legislator that it's continuing on its original location, but I looked at the transcripts from the May's Trustees meeting and it said there that they are looking for alternative locations. This is going on for almost three years. A lot of things have happened in those three years. I am against the modular design, but in this month's recreation trade magazines, one of the companies comes out and says that for certain budgets, anything over \$100,000, it should be called a hybrid park. The budget for the Smith Point Park is \$250,000. I've been told that the park in Greenlawn cost approximately \$100,000 to \$125,000 and they have more obstacles. I can't see how the budget of \$250,000 is being pushed for this modular design and we're getting less than the Town of Huntington got for double the money. There's been no further movement on this project. The people designing it don't know what the obstacles are and it should offend anyone that has to pay for it. That's my opinion.

Chairman Corwin asks Commissioner Foley for his comments.

Commissioner Foley: The last information we had was that the local Legislator was desirous of putting it at a different location. The Legislator was talking to the town, the YMCA, maybe the school district. The location is still undecided. The design is essentially complete. We've paid the designers and we know what we would build if we settled on a location. Unlike some of our other capital projects, this was a legislative initiative, so we take our lead from them unless they're headed down the wrong path. We're waiting for a signal on location.

Chairman Corwin: Are we talking about the whole Legislature or one particular Legislator?

Commissioner Foley: This is in Legislator Browning's district. The money was originally obtained by Legislator O'Leary, who served there before she did.

Chairman Corwin: So the new location is somewhere in that district.

Commissioner Foley: I believe so. I don't think it's settled.

Mr. Lilly: No, it's not according to Legislator Browning. They are trying to have the town come up with a location. My other question is - are we moving it because of the objections of a few people?

Chairman Corwin: The Commissioner or Tracey - is there a committee working on this that will decide the ultimate location?

Chairman Foley: No, as I said before, we take our lead from the Legislator. I think if a place could be found closer to the population center, everyone would be better off. Legislator Browning says that's also her goal. These things do take time with permits, environmental clearances and a number of other things.

Mr. Lilly: Legislator Browning says it is going in the original location, so I'm getting two different stories. What happens if we get another Legislator and he says he wants to put it back where it was going?

Trustee Fritz: Are you in favor of the location at Smith Point?

Mr. Lilly: No, it is too far away from the population. It's not a great location, but are we going to sit and wait for the town to come up with another location? I'm also not in favor of the design. I think that with the money that is allocated we could get something a lot better than what is being proposed. If the location changes, will we have to go by the original design? Who will be the lead in this if it's joint?

Chairman Corwin: Most factors will be determined by the selection of the location and it sounds like the Commissioner's office is going to need definitive guidance from Legislator Browning's office since that is the office that will select the exact location.

Trustee Cardillo: We have a skate park in Riverhead and, to my knowledge, it is somewhat underutilized. I've heard some of the skaters went out into the woods and made their own because the park that was built does not really meet the skaters' needs.

Mr. Lilly: In Riverhead, the advanced section of the skate park was not really that advanced.

Trustee McKay: Were any members of the skating community involved in the design?

Commissioner Foley: Absolutely – kids, adults, and the local community were at three meetings to have input into the design. Not everything they recommended was included in the design, but we went as far as we could.

Chairman Corwin: Mr. Lilly, we do appreciate you attending and talking to us. The Trustees are generally supportive of the skateboard park concept. If that's something the Legislature can initiate and Parks can work out, that's fine. From what I hear, there are a number of issues and I urge that to keep things straight, at this point just focus on having Legislator Browning's office work with you and come up with a site. If the site is a county park, the Commissioner's office jumps into action. If the site is some other site, or a partnership between the town and the county, it's a whole different issue. I think Legislator Browning's office is looking for identification of an alternate site to Smith Point Park that is acceptable to the community. It is a legislative initiative for that district and they need to indicate to the Parks Department where they'd like to see it. If that involves the town in some way, I don't think it's the Commissioner's place to be asking the town to go talk to their Legislator. I ask that the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner keep us posted on what you hear or don't hear from Legislator Browning's office and I ask Trustee Pearsall to keep us posted on what you hear from the legislature. I want to thank you for coming Mr. Lilly.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Corwin: I just have two brief items. First is, with my Pine Barrens hat on, we are about to turn over to the Parks Department three additional ATV's. Two 4 x 4's and one 6 x 6. The funding for this comes through the Pine Barrens Law Enforcement Council which received \$175,000 for a non Pine Barrens environmental violation through the state environmental conservation officers' good work out in western Suffolk. As part of the settlement of that violation, the settling party agreed to pay an environmental benefit payment to an interested party. That interested party was selected to be the Pine Barrens Law Enforcement Council. The three ATV's will be turned over to Parks.

Chairman Corwin: My only other item is to remind you my term as Chair probably expires next month, so you need to give that some thought.

Commissioner Foley: I think your reappointment and John Fritz's are laid on the table, so they should plan to be at the Parks Committee meeting coming up.

Chairman Corwin: I plan on being there.

Commissioner Foley: The next Parks Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 15th at 11:00 AM.

Chairman Corwin: As always, we certainly encourage the Trustees, as many of you have, to go the Parks Committee because what goes on at the Parks Committee is a preview of what goes on at the full Legislature and it also gives you very detailed insight on some of the community concerns.

OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS

Trustee Fritz: Do you have any updates on the fishing pier and eel grass beds?

Commissioner Foley: Eel grass beds are no longer an issue. The type of lumber we are going to use is an issue. The cost just went up by about 20% or more. We still don't have the FINS permit which we need to get the CORPS permit.

Trustee White: I'd like to thank Nick, the Commissioner, Tracey and Colleen for the help they've given us on the GATR site project. It looks like we may get it one day. As important, Third House restoration is coming along very nicely.

Trustee Fritz: What about the Smith Point campground fishing access?

Commissioner Foley: We looked at it and I am not planning to do anything to change the route to Burma Road right now. You can still get there on the beach as it is right now. I'm not inclined to cut a new road until it's obvious that the regular access is going to be cut off for some extended period of time. The fishermen may have to occasionally put up with a short interruption, but if it looks like the beach is coming back and it looks like the damage is not so severe, I'm not inclined to rip up something new.

Trustee Fritz: The problem is not going through the campground – it's creating another road between the campground and Burma Road.

Commissioner Foley: That's not traffic I want to put as close to the campground as would be required for this access.

Trustee Fritz: Another subject is Shagwong.

Commissioner Foley: We have to do all the environmental assessments to establish this camping area. CCOM appreciated your meeting with them. They sent in a list of issues. I sent them to Nick and promised them we would consider those, and we will.

Trustee White: Have you heard anything from the campers?

Commissioner Foley: Maybe one.

Trustee White: In the past the campers were opposed to it.

Bill Sickles: Since we were approached by Chuck Hollins from LIBBA to look at it as an alternative again, we haven't gotten any negative input from the campers because they understood and looked at it as an alternative to not camping at all.

Trustee McKay: I have two items. There was an editorial in Newsday the other day about "new penalties help protect county land". It refers to littering and abandoning things on Nassau County property. What kind of penalties do we have?

Chairman Foley: I will have to do some research on that issue.

Chairman Corwin: There is a county law on the books that doubles the fines for convictions for dumping if you're within the state defined Pine Barrens area. It would include any land within the Pine Barrens.

Trustee McKay: The second item came up in relation to our discussions about the skateboard park. What kind of facilities should be provided by the towns and which ones by the county? Huntington has provided a skate park and we are in the process of providing another one. It seems to me that the other towns should be getting active and meeting these needs and a legislative initiative to put the county into the skate park business might not be in the best interest of the Parks.

Commissioner Foley: I don't disagree with you. Long Island is different from a lot of areas in the country. It's not dominated by a city. I equate this conversation to the dog park issue. People who are in favor of that keep pointing us to the city of Seattle, San Francisco, New York, who have successfully done this. They have a different concentration of population, a different funding basis. These comparisons aren't always fair and who does what hasn't been sorted out on Long Island. There are many towns that have taken on the burden of the skate parks and built them with varying degrees of success. I think there are more towns thinking about it today and how they can address this. This whole thing is unfolding and may sort itself out.

Trustee McKay: Just from my experience in Huntington, this skate park will require personnel. People have to be there to supervise and collect fees and so on. If the county does begin to operate a skate park, it will have to face that issue as well.

Miles Borden: Some time ago Trustees were issued identification cards and, if that is still in effect, I would appreciate a card. Parks staff will look into this issue.

Trustee Hilary: Since I'm new to this, is there anything Bill would like to discuss with me specific about Southold? I'm trying to figure out what my expectations are. I have gone around with the Director of Public Works, Jim McMann, and visited a number of the sites already. I can talk to Bill after the meeting.

Tom Isles: Alex's comment is a comment of interest and I think in terms of the process for selecting these small hamlet parks – what is the role of the county, the town, the villages and so forth? This is something that is a timely issue and we'd be happy to participate or assist in that, if

the Trustees wish.

Chairman Corwin: We would certainly welcome Planning's input on this.

Lauretta Fischer: I think programs have evolved into trying to reach out to more of an active park land use in recent years, but still having the town's role on some level. There is some transition going on - how much the county wants to move into the active, local uses versus the regional approaches, which we've always had, and environmental protection, which has been our goal.

DATE AND LOCATION OF NEXT MEETING

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Thursday, November 16th, 2006 at 1:00 PM at Southaven Park in Yaphank. Lunch will be served at 12:00 noon.

**The motion to adjourn was made by Trustee White and seconded by Trustee Fritz.
Motion approved unanimously by a vote 10-0-0.**

Minutes submitted by Ann Rothenberg.